

Tour Report UK – Wild Pembrokeshire 7-11 July 2021

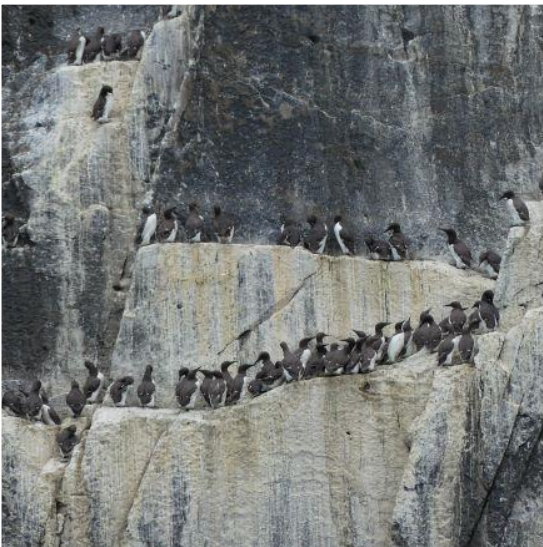
Atlantic puffin - Skomer



Harbour porpoise - Ramsey Sound



Guillemot - Ramsey Island



Atlantic grey seal - Ramsey Island



Day 1: Wednesday 7 July 2021

Weather: sunny 19°C

We met on a sunny afternoon in the beautiful grounds of our hotel, Cuffern Manor, and after a refreshing cup of tea were soon making our way to West Williamston and the SWW Wildlife Trust reserve on the estuary. On arrival a few late summer warblers were heard, including blackcap and chiffchaff. A pair of Bullfinches were also heard and seen as we made our way through the traditionally managed hay meadows with plenty of burnet moths buzzing around. The tide was coming in which made it rather quiet for waders, but a few curlew, shelduck and little egret were seen on what was a warm and sunny late afternoon visit. On the route back, we called in to Carew Castle which was seen in beautiful evening light and we observed a range of birds in the mill pool, including a pair of black-tailed godwit. For our evening meal we headed for Broad Haven's Ocean Café with its sea view, a seafood medley, and there witnessed England beat Denmark in the European Championship football match in a rather noisy atmosphere, thus ending a varied first half day.

Day 2: Thursday 8 July 2021

Weather: sunny 19 °C

We made our way to Martin's Haven on the Marloes Peninsula for our 10am departure to Skomer. A calm Jack Sound on a perfect summer's day was all we could ask for as we had our first views of puffins, razorbills and guillemots among other seabirds, then as we approached North Haven we saw thousands of puffins in the air and on the sea, a spectacular sight. A walk to the northernmost part of the island and Garner Stone revealed whitethroat and sedge warbler, a Manx shearwater in the path and many recently fledged lesser black-backed gull's practice-flying. Red campion and sheep's sorrel were at their peak, fully illuminated by the sun and framed by a deep blue sea. A wonderful and precious time was spent with puffins at The Wick, as returning birds with sand-eels were tracked by herring gulls and photographers alike. A walk back across the island gave close views of a flock of chough. A pleasant crossing back to mainland was followed by a visit to the nearby Gann Estuary. A super time was spent here as wader migration was clearly underway, with greenshank, dunlin, a large flock of curlew and a whimbrel, together with common blue and small copper butterflies. Al fresco dinner taken in nearby Dale at the Griffin Inn in a warming evening sun, ending a full and pleasant wildlife-viewing day.

Day 3: Friday 9 July 2021

Weather: cloudy 18 °C

Moth trapping in the walled garden provided a leisurely start to the day, slightly blighted by a heavy shower, that ended up being the only rain of the day. Highlights included privet, elephant and poplar hawkmoths and a vast variety of other species, many of which we had to release unidentified as we had so many. Afterwards we headed for St Justinian's to take our boat for a trip around Ramsey Island. An ebbing tide created ideal conditions for fish predators, and views of wonderful gannets plunge-diving were evidence of this. Later we had fantastic close views of harbour porpoise feeding in the same place, spotting their short triangular dorsal fins and two-tone colouration. Our engaging guide on the boat provided interesting commentary about the geology, history and wildlife of Ramsey. Other highlights included seeing many grey seals, a peregrine, auks, fulmar, raven and a couple of red kite. On our return we proceeded through St David's and to the eastern side to the relative wilderness of Dowrog Common and a cup of tea. An interesting hour or two absorbing this extensive heath-fen gave us views of a grasshopper warbler and a chance to get more familiar with the flora, which included bog asphodel. Our evening meal was taken in St David's, but not before an hour spent looking at St David's itself. Our last destination of the day Strumble Head west of Fishguard. We were treated to the spectacular movement of thousands of Manx shearwaters moving west in very still conditions, a mesmerising phenomenon and a very nice way to end the day.

Day 4: Saturday 10 July 2021

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Weather: sunny 21°C

We drove down to the National Trust's Stackpole Estate today to walk to St Govan's Chapel. This is very much a day's walk through many habitats, with woodland, reedbed, lakes, sand dunes and coastal heath. As expected with so much variety on a beautiful summer's day we saw a huge variety of wildlife. Initial sounds were heard in a stand of hemlock woodland, with siskins and goldcrests singing. Later we saw and heard reed warbler, watched moorhens, mallards and mute swans. Fish sightings included three-spined stickle back, roach and pike in Bosherton Lakes. Walking through the dunes we saw pyramidal orchid, common restharrow amongst a vast array of dune-flora. The cliff top walk was simply astounding with all views bathed in the summer sun with a stunning blue sea and distant views of Lundy. Dark-green fritillaries abounded, but alas none could be seen resting for photographic purposes. The remarkable chapel halfway down the cliff at St Govan's was a scene perhaps more Mediterranean than Welsh. A return walk after an ice-cream followed, giving us all a chance to experience the same route from a different angle, with cooler shade towards the end and the minibus providing a welcome site on such a warm day. A pleasant dinner at Lamphey followed on our way back to Cuffern Manor.

Day 5: Sunday 18 July 2021

Weather: cloudy with rain; 16 °C

Unsettled weather greeted us today and all but one of our party decided to depart early, thus ending what had been a successful tour for them. Two of us proceeded to nearby Llangoffan Fen, a SSSI and National Nature Reserve. A rainy time was had, though we managed to shelter in the hide and get around the nature trail enjoying more little brown jobs that included viewing reed bunting and whitethroat, not forgetting experiencing the wonderful stands of giant tussock sedge. Thus, at noon, the tour ended for everyone, though the dampness at the end certainly didn't detract from what had been a wonderful, sun-bathed landscape packed full of wildlife. Our full tour to a few corners of Pembrokeshire and some of its wonderful islands was a successful and fun, that shall no doubt live in the memory of everyone for a long time to come.

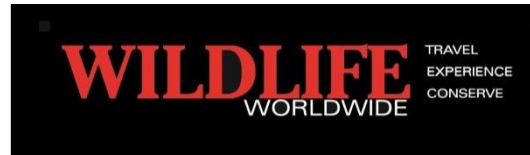
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Checklist



	Common Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
	BIRDS					
1	Northern fulmar		✓	✓	✓	
2	Manx shearwater		✓	✓		
3	Gannet		✓	✓	✓	
4	Cormorant		✓	✓		
5	Shag			✓		
6	Little egret		✓			
7	Grey heron		✓		✓	
8	Mute swan				✓	
9	Canada goose		✓			
10	Shelduck		✓			
11	Mallard		✓		✓	
12	Red kite		✓	✓		
13	Buzzard	✓	✓	✓	✓	
14	Sparrowhawk	✓	✓	✓		
15	Kestrel		✓	✓		
16	Peregrine			✓		
17	Moorhen				✓	
18	Oystercatcher		✓	✓	✓	
19	Black-tailed godwit	✓				
20	Curlew	✓	✓			
21	Herring gull				✓	
22	Lesser black-backed gull	✓	✓	✓	✓	

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23	Great black-backed gull		✓	✓	✓	
24	Kittiwake		✓	✓		
25	Puffin		✓	✓		
26	Guillemot		✓	✓		
27	Razorbill		✓	✓		
28	Woodpigeon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
29	Stock dove (heard)	✓			✓	
30	Short-eared owl		✓			
31	Little owl					
32	Swift	✓	✓	✓	✓	
33	Great-spotted woodpecker			✓	✓	
34	Skylark		✓		✓	
35	Swallow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
36	House martin		✓		✓	
37	Meadow pipit	✓	✓	✓	✓	
38	Rock pipit		✓	✓		
39	Pied wagtail		✓	✓	✓	
40	Wren	✓	✓	✓	✓	
41	Dunnock	✓	✓	✓	✓	
42	Robin	✓	✓	✓	✓	
43	Wheatear		✓			
44	Stonechat			✓		
45	Song thrush	✓	✓	✓	✓	
46	Blackbird	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
47	Blackcap	✓	✓	✓		
48	Whitethroat		✓	✓		
49	Sedge warbler		✓	✓		✓
50	Reed warbler		H		✓	

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51	Grasshopper warbler			✓		
52	Willow warbler				✓	
53	Chiffchaff			✓	✓	✓
54	Goldcrest				✓	
55	Great tit				✓	
56	Blue tit		✓		✓	
57	Treecreeper				H	
58	Magpie	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
59	Carrion crow	✓	✓	✓	✓	
60	Rook		✓	✓		✓
61	Jackdaw	✓	✓	✓		✓
62	Raven		✓			✓
63	Chough		✓	✓		
64	Starling		✓	✓		
65	House sparrow		✓	✓	✓	✓
66	Chaffinch	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
67	Linnet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
68	Goldfinch	✓	✓	✓	✓	
69	Bullfinch	✓	✓			✓
70	Reed bunting			✓		✓
71	Yellowhammer			✓		
	INSECTS					
1	Large skipper	✓				
2	Small copper		✓			
3	Common blue	✓	✓		✓	
4	Dark-green fritillary				✓	
5	Red admiral				✓	
6	Small tortoiseshell				✓	

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7	Green-veined white				✓	
8	Meadow brown	✓			✓	
9	Ringlet				✓	
10	Elephant hawkmoth				✓	
11	Poplar hawkmoth				✓	
12	Privet hawkmoth				✓	
	MAMMALS					
1	Rabbit		✓	✓	✓	
2	Grey squirrel				✓	
3	Harbour porpoise			✓		
4	Fox	✓				
5	Grey seal		✓	✓		
	AMPHIBIANS					
1	Common frog				✓	✓
	SOME OBSERVED PLANTS					
1	Lesser spearwort					
2	Red campion		✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Sea campion		✓			
4	Ragged robin				✓	
5	Scentless mayweed		✓			
6	Tussock sedge					✓
7	Rest harrow				✓	
8	Birds foot trefoil	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Rosebay willowherb	✓	✓	✓	✓	
10	Hemlock water dropwort				✓	
11	Wild carrot		✓			
12	Hemlock	✓				
13	Hogweed	✓				

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14	Alexanders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Rock samphire	✓				
16	Water forget me not			✓		
17	Viper's bugloss				✓	
18	Ivy broomrape				✓	
19	Ox-eye daisy				✓	
20	Greater knapweed				✓	
21	White water lily				✓	
22	Yellow iris	✓	✓	✓		✓
23	Southern marsh orchid			✓	✓	
24	Common spotted orchid				✓	
25	Pyramidal orchid				✓	
26	Lords and ladies				✓	

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